

Jobs for the Girls

The staff of Sydney University have lately all been sent a leaflet, entitled "Equal Employment Opportunity Statement." It is signed by the Vice-Chancellor, and was accompanied by a letter from him, which states that the leaflet was prepared by a committee of the Senate of the University, and by the University's "Equal Employment Opportunity Unit."

The leaflet does not disappoint the expectations which, coming from such a source, it naturally arouses. That is, it is all jargon, inconsistency, and evasiveness. And yet, somehow, every member of staff understands perfectly well what it means! It purports to be for the benefit of all conceivable classes of victims of "discrimination"; and yet, again, everyone on the staff somehow knows well enough that one *particular* class of beneficiaries is especially intended. No, Virginia, there isn't really any Santa Claus, and this leaflet isn't really about jobs for the lame, or the black, or the Vietnamese, or even the homosexuals. It is about jobs for the girls.

The University's official policy, as late as last year, was a simple one: the best candidate should be appointed. Well, the present leaflet, which is as official as anything could be, not only does *not* say that, or anything like it; it implies, as clearly as possible, the opposite. For it expressly identifies women, and women alone, as having been in fact discriminated against unfairly (even if only "indirectly") in the past; and it calls for the setting of "numerical targets together with a timetable for their achievement," in order to "redress" this past discrimination. Translating from feminese into English, this means: "at least half the staff must soon be women." And this mes-

sage is so loud and clear that it is now being understood, as I say, even by the most dull-witted members of the staff.

Actually the message is rather worse than that. For the leaflet says that "past discrimination requires redress by ... providing programmes for members of groups who have been disadvantaged." You have to admire the wonderful evasiveness of that word "programmes." It *could* mean musical programmes, perhaps, or TV programmes? But no, Virginia, what I have just quoted is feminese for: "*more than half* of the jobs must be for the girls."

Lord Melbourne once said that, of all his honors, the one he liked best was the Garter, because there was no damned nonsense about merit attached to it. Apparently we will soon be able to say the same thing about appointments at Sydney University.

When is *der Tag*? The leaflet does not say. Rumor says 1990, and that is likely enough. Anyway, it is certainly not far off. And by that time, unless the provisions of this leaflet can be evaded, there will just *have* to be an awful lot of jobs at Sydney which go to women without any nonsense about merit. A certain amount of this has been going on for some years already, at Sydney and elsewhere, as I said in last September's *Quadrant*.^{*} But to meet the "timetable" it will have to be increased enormously.

How is the University to be compelled to comply? Easily. Not by direct legislation: that could be troublesome, and is quite unnecessary. It will be done by governments threatening to cut off money. At another university in New South Wales, the head of a school has already been told unofficially, by his Vice-Chancellor, that there will be no government money for his school after 1990, if half of its staff are not by then women. This was over a year ago, and no doubt it will be the pattern for the future. Since universities get virtually no money except government money, they are, of course, quite unable to resist this kind of threat.

The key to the whole situation, therefore, is feminist pressure on governments. The quality of university staff is sure to be disastrously worsened, unless that pressure can somehow be reduced.

But how is this to be done? Our governments care little about what happens in universities. Why should they? Every farmer,

^{*}See David Stove, "The Feminists and the Universities," *Quadrant*, vol. 28, no. 9 (September, 1984), p. 8, and "Universities and Feminists Once More," *Quadrant*, vol. 28, no. 11 (November, 1984), p. 60.—Ed.

every employer of labor, every policeman, is a person who is of some use; but you cannot say the same of one professor, or one student, in twenty. It is unreasonable to expect democratically elected ministers to care much, if mathematics and philosophy and physics are put into progressively more incompetent hands. And then, think of Ministers, beset in their offices (and likely enough at home too) by feminist furies: their chief anxiety must naturally be to escape the noise. Small wonder if they surrender, especially since it is absent third parties who suffer the consequences of their surrender.

If it comes to that, how many people are there, even outside governments, who will do so much as publicly to call themselves anti-feminists? Mary McCarthy said of Lillian Hellman that every word she wrote was a lie, including "a" and "the." Similarly, I say that contemporary feminism is not 64 percent, not 97 percent, but *all* rubbish, and destructive rubbish at that. But how many will (except in private!) agree with me? I will be lucky if my motion even finds someone to second it.

These things being so, the prospect before us at Sydney University is dark indeed. I see no hope, in fact, except from the possibility that the real world may intrude upon the campus, in the shape of national poverty. Feminism is a disease of the rich: it is born of idleness, hence of leisure, hence of money. The sheer pressure of actuality immunizes poor people against feminist vapors. Now Australia is, by all the indications, rapidly becoming a poor country. The conservationists, the anti-nuclears, and the Aborigines, are seeing to that, along with the ever increasing extravagance of our governments, and the ever increasing laziness of the bulk of the population. Is there not some hope, then, that jobs-for-the-girls will come to be recognized as a luxury we cannot afford? That feminism will be blown away by the wind of poverty, and (as the poet sings), "leave not a wrack behind"?

I think there is some hope of this. But very little. Easily the most likely outcome is the combination of evils: that we will have poverty *and* rampant feminism. This is certainly the future which the present leaflet pre-figures. It calmly promises the provision of such million dollar trifles as "adequate child care facilities" for hundreds of feminist mums. And all of that is before you even come to the main business: the "Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan." (No, I am not making this up.) This will obviously require a very

large staff. Indeed, the Equal Employment Opportunity Unit, although its operations could hardly be said to have begun yet, already has a staff of three, with two more positions currently being advertised. And when you consider that the Unit's "Review of Staff Utilisation and Personnel Practices" is not only going to be "continuing," but must comprehend the Unit *itself*, as well as the many thousands of other staff—well, anyone can see that the sky's the limit. To assure your children's economic future, put them into feminism. I seem to hear a lot of my friends plaintively asking, "But what money, or even rooms, will be left over for physics, or philosophy, or mathematics?" Friend, do not ask for whom the feminist bell tolls: it tolls for thee.

Why do I say that this worst possible outcome is also the likeliest? Simply because the causes which are at work are all of them (as far as experience enables us to judge) irreversible ones. Industrious populations have often evolved into lazy ones, but never the other way about. Successive governments, even when they promise to spend less (*i.e.* tax less) than their predecessors, in fact spend more—*always*. And finally, the feminist virus never spontaneously remits, but on the contrary absorbs its hosts at an ever increasing rate. It could not be otherwise. Nothing, not even heroin, is more stimulating, or more addictive, than hate, and that is the fuel that feminism runs on.

The cream of the jest is that women in Australia never *were* unfairly treated in competition for university jobs; so that there never was an injustice to be "redressed." I said this in the September 1984 *Quadrant*, and the feminists, though they raised a considerable squall about my article, were distinctly reluctant to contest this particular claim. It is not contested in this leaflet either, even by implication.

In fact the *only* discrimination against women which even the writers of this leaflet can come up with is the "*indirect* discrimination" (as they call it), arising from the burdens which fall only or mainly on women, "of childbearing, child rearing, and other family responsibilities."

Yet it is a mere abuse of language, of course, to call this discrimination at all; and it would be easily recognized as such in any other case. Fatherhood, too, for example almost inevitably brings burdens of its own, and fathers, therefore, whether as holders of or candidates for university jobs, have always been at some disadvantage

compared with bachelors. But no one would dream of saying, on that account, that the University has discriminated against fathers. Or take sickness. Poor health, too, is a burden, and a cruel one, on anyone holding or aspiring to a university job. But no one would say on that account that the University has been guilty of discrimination in favor of healthy people, or call on the University to “redress” its past discrimination against the sick. Yet that is essentially the feminist inference: that is the reason why the quality of university staff must be made worse than it would otherwise be. God almighty, what tripe!